



# Christmas Blessings



*Dear Friend of the Missions:*

At Christmas we all wish to give some gift to those who deserve some symbol of gratitude and affection from us.

This booklet is a little gift from our Franciscan missionaries, from their little children, and from us. In its own way the message is one of praise and thanksgiving.

To help you pray to the Infant Savior we offer these nine days of reflections and prayers in the hope you may find them a useful guide and inspiration.

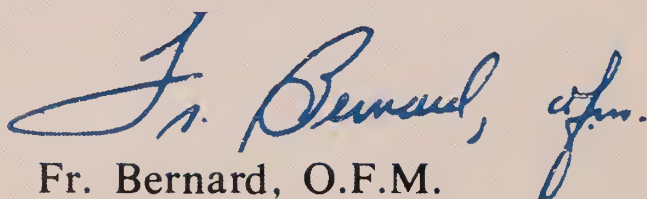
You may wish to offer the Novena of praise and petition in advance of Christmas, at any time during the Christmas-Epiphany season, or throughout the year.

Because you have so often shown your devotion to Christ by supporting the preaching of the Gospel, I know He will listen attentively to your intentions and requests.

You can be sure that we will remember those intentions in our Christmas Novena of Masses here.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Yours gratefully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Fr. Bernard, O.F.M." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fr. Bernard, O.F.M.  
*Director*



## Novena to the Christ Child in the Christmas Season

### Daily Novena Prayer

Infant Jesus, so that we might become sons of God, you became a helpless little child. In homage, gratitude, and admiration, we kneel before you. Though hindered by our sins, we know your love exceeds our frequent failures. Please help us, divine Child, to appreciate the great mystery of your life, and assist us to remake our lives according to your word. By the intercession of our Virgin-Mother, Mary most holy, assist us now in all our necessities.

### FIRST DAY

**The Word of God:** There was no room for them in the place where travelers lodged.  
(*Luke 2:7*)

**Reflection:** No room in the inn for the Lord who made heaven and earth! No place except with the animals for the Savior of men and his Virgin Mother!

**Prayer:** Infant Savior, you left the throne of heaven to share our life, to live as a human being. You became a helpless infant, and asked your holy Mother and St. Joseph to share your lot among the poorest. Help us, Lord, by your example to understand the depths of love for us that inspired your humble birth and to imitate your love of littleness in our own life. Amen.

**Practice:** If the Lord of creation chose to be so little, let us imitate Him today by accepting gladly one pain or trouble in our life.

## SECOND DAY

**The Word of God:** To His own He came, yet His own did not accept Him. (*John 1:11*)

**Reflection:** To love deeply, to offer one's self in love, and to have it rejected, what greater trial is there in life?

**Prayer:** Infant Jesus, it was your infinite love that prompted your coming among us to share our lot as men, to be ready to live as the poorest of men, and even to die as a common criminal. Please teach us to love as

you did, and to take the risk of having love rejected and being despised for your sake. Let your grace sustain me, your example inspire me, your teaching correct me. Amen.

**Practice:** Show special kindness, as Jesus did, to those who rejected Him by doing good to someone you love the least.

## THIRD DAY

**The Word of God:** The angel said to them: You have nothing to fear! (*Luke 2:10*)

**Reflection:** When we are very much afraid, as the simple shepherds were, let us remember the angel's message, and trust in God's goodness.

**Prayer:** Sweet Babe of Bethlehem, God protected you as a child from the envy of Herod, and from the hazards of your infancy. Please assist us in our weakness to place our trust in God's provident care and love, protect us from the effects of our own sin, and help us to be strong and unafraid. Increase our love of you, our obedience to your will, and our imitation of your example so that amid all the trials of life we may place all our hope in you. Amen.

**Practice:** Just once today put your own convenience and self-interest aside in order to do a deed of compassion for one of Christ's needy brothers.

## FOURTH DAY

**The Word of God:** All this is the work of the kindness of our God; He, the Dayspring, shall visit us. (*Luke 1:78*)

**Reflection:** It was our need that brought the Son of God from heaven to assume our fallen nature. He took pity on our misery and helplessness.

**Prayer:** Little Lord Jesus, it is sin and its consequences that now afflict us. In your love you undertook to conquer sin and death for us in your own person. Thus, you showed us the path to eternal glory which we can only attain by following you faithfully. Help us, powerful Babe of Bethlehem, to live as you did to overcome sin, and to do the Father's will in all things. Amen.

**Practice:** Just for today, try faithfully with Jesus' help to do God's will rather than to follow our own inclination.

## FIFTH DAY

**The Word of God:** The grace of God has appeared, offering salvation to all men. (*Titus 2:11*)

**Reflection:** The Infant Jesus redeemed us just by taking on our fallen human nature, but His love for us was so great He gave up His life as well.

**Prayer:** Infant Savior, how can we ever

thank you or prove grateful enough for all you have done to rescue us from misery and eternal death? You ask us only to sacrifice our own selfish desires and plans, and do whatever is your divine will for us. Help us, please, to say as you did, "Let thy will be done," for God's will is our peace. Amen.

**Practice:** Think of one action you can perform today that will please God, and help one of God's children as He has helped you.

## SIXTH DAY

**The Word of God:** Let this be a sign to you: in a manger you will find an infant in swaddling clothes. (*Luke 2:12*)

**Reflection:** The Lord adorned the heavens with planets and stars, and our earth with plants and flowers, yet He rests in a cold stable.

**Prayer:** Little Savior of mankind, you created the world and all that is in it by your plentiful power. By that same power you will come to judge the world. But to save us and to win us you came in weakness and littleness to prove to us how with your assistance, strength may be born in the powerlessness of love. Amen.

**Practice:** Let us humble ourselves today to honor the Christ Child and to overcome our pride with the help of His grace.



## SEVENTH DAY

**The Word of God:** We found the child with Mary, His mother. (*Matthew 2:11*)

**Reflection:** The wise men took great trouble and spared no pain or expense in order to seek out and find the newborn king.

**Prayer:** How often, Infant Jesus, we are too tired, too careless, or too disinterested to come to worship you as we ought! Yet, you wait for us, love us from afar, and send your grace to draw us to you. Help us, Lord Jesus, to be attentive to your voice, to hasten to you in every need, and to adore you as the wise men did. Then, you will lead and guide us safely home again. Amen.

**Practice:** We always can find Christ today if we seek Him in His temple, or among the poor and the lonely who are His special care.

## EIGHTH DAY

**The Word of God:** Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart. (*Luke 2:19*)

**Reflection:** Our blessed Mother learned to appreciate the mysteries of Christ's life just as we must by silent prayer and reflection.

**Prayer:** Jesus, our Infant Savior, all you said and did in your life among us has meaning and purpose. Help us, then, to follow your words and example and apply them each day in the circumstances of our own life.



With your grace, and the intercession of our Virgin-Mother Mary, may we grow in the knowledge and love of God by perfect obedience to your Commandments. Amen.

**Practice:** Sit quietly for five minutes today and tell the Infant Savior in your heart that you wish to love Him perfectly.

## NINTH DAY

**The Word of God:** I come to proclaim good news to you—tidings of great joy. (*Luke 2:10*)

**Reflection:** Until we have some sense of the awfulness of sin, and of our own misery and wretchedness we will never rightly value the good news of Christ.

**Prayer:** Infant Savior of the world, in your loving mercy, “guide our feet into the way of peace.” Amid all the cares and anxieties of life lead us always along the paths of righteousness, for the sake of your name. You have completed the work of our salvation, but make it effective in us who are so prone to stumble, and be diverted from our true path. Come to our aid. Amen.

**Practice:** Resolve today for love of the Christ Child to forgive everyone who has ever tried to hurt or harm you in any way.

### Daily Prayer of Petition

In your loving kindness, Infant Savior, I beg your aid amid my own necessities and

anxieties. All my cares I offer you in humble worship and confidence.

Please be mindful, too, of the Holy Father, our Bishops, our Pastors, and all priests and religious who are shepherds of our souls. Fortify them as you also strengthen and help our magistrates and civil rulers, and protect our country against its enemies.

Assist and sustain all who suffer, the sick, the destitute, prisoners, and all who are in any way afflicted. Have pity, too, most merciful Savior, on all who have not yet heard the good news of your salvation. Please send them apostolic missionaries.

Bless us all, Lord Jesus, and lead us safely to your heavenly kingdom. Amen.

### **Prayer to Jesus, Our Brother**

Lord Jesus, help us to share your desire for the salvation of the whole world. This desire you daily renew for us in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Lord Jesus, you are always ready to intercede for us and assist us. Please open our eyes to the needs of your other brothers for whom you died as you did for me.

Let me help them, please, by prayer, penance, and sacrifice to receive your message as gladly and freely as it was given to us. By leading a life worthy of your sacrifice may we proclaim your message, make the earth holy, and be the light of the world. Amen.

**Prayer of Praise  
and Petition  
to the Infant Jesus**

In adoration we kneel before your crib. You wish, little Lord Jesus, only our love and affection. You come to us as a little child the better to win our hearts.

Though you are our all-powerful God, you conceal your divinity for love of us. For our sake you wish to be weak, helpless, and wholly dependent on us creatures you, yourself, made. Thus, you show how necessary it is for us to be humble, obedient, and as trusting as you were.

Assist us in your tender mercy to imitate you, to rule by serving, to conquer by loving, to be great by becoming little, to be powerful when weakest, to gain life eternal by losing one's life for your sake. So will we be happy always by following your commands and example.

May your holy Virgin-Mother, Mary, assist us. Amen.



## THE HOLY FAMILY

The good family is marked by a mutual love which brightens and warms like a flame the practice of every virtue.

Goodness sweetens and strengthens the leadership of the father, deepens the mother's delicate tact, encourages the fidelity of the children, tempers their exuberance, and inspires their unstinting sacrifices.

*Pope John XXIII*

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